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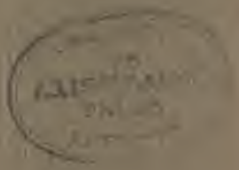

A Christmas Gift Book

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WILLIAM DAY SIMONDS.

THE CHRIST
OF THE HUMAN HEART

A CHRISTMAS GIFT-BOOK

BY

WILLIAM DAY SIMONDS

PUBLISHED BY THE
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PRICE 50 CENTS

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A VISION OF JESUS

SOMETIMES winged imagination — most God-like gift possessed by man—carries me across oceans and continents, and back through many dark and dreary centuries until I stand an Israelite, worshipping at the altars of my people. I hear the laws of Moses learnedly expounded and in the stately Sabbath service pay fitting, if formal, praise to that dread Jehovah whose name I dare not take upon my lips.

But the world is sad. My people are oppressed. We are looking for a deliverer—one who in might and majesty will drive the hated Roman from the land, and give us once again the glory of ancient days. So life goes on 'twixt fear and hope until at length we hear the rumor strange, "Behold the Messiah, the Man of Galilee draws near." In imagination wrapt I stand amidst the multitude of those who gaze into his face divine, and listen to the music of his words.

I hear him call that distant and cloud-robed God, worshipped from afar in synagogue and temple, HIS FATHER, *and I am astonished at his speech. It offends me that a man should call God,* FATHER.

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Again the prophet says of poor and outcast men—these are my brothers, and again I am offended, for what communion hath light with darkness, knowledge with ignorance or virtue with vice.

But soon I see the truth profound that underlies this strange new gospel. If there be a God at all—who is the life of all that was—and is—and is to be—that God the father is of all mankind. And if we all were born into this realm of smiles and tears by one high wisdom and one strong love, then are we BROTHERS *to the last man of us, forever.*

Henceforth the Nazarene's faith is mine, and through the eventful days I follow on—not knowing whither I am led—toward Herod's court and Pilate's cross. I see the fickle crowds who hang upon his words and deeds saying in thoughtless speech, "This is a God." I see the growing hatred of bigotry and power, before which flees the timid multitude like silly sheep. And then those sad, proud days whereon the Master fronts alone—for we were faithless friends—the powers that seek his life. Was there ever in "all the tide of times," we ask, such dignity in defeat, such tenderness in misery. Herod's slaves can wring from him no syllable that says, "My Mission is a Lie." Pale and scarred with torture stroke he answers Pilate with fearless words and wise—"To this end was I born

and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

Oh God! How long the way from judgment seat to that bare rock on which the sweetest life since time began must yield its breath to cruelty and hate. And there for one dark moment's space we—who have loved him, and by resistless fascination drawn, behold him suffering—fear that his faith will fail. For sadder words man never spoke, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me." Darkness for one moment's space and then we know that victory is his and ours. With cry of "finished" trial and of pain, that Pilate might have heard in distant palace, our Master yielded up his life, wholly brave, wholly true, wholly God's to the last death word that smote our coward hearts.

And now I do announce that yonder, helpless, nail-pierced hand shall change, at last, the course of centuries—writing, above creeds that bind and blind—and tyrannys that crush, his own eternal verities—The Fatherhood of God, The Brotherhood of Man.

The Christ of the Human Heart

THE OLD, OLD STORY

HIDDEN away in my well-worn and well-beloved volume of Walt Whitman, I find these lines, expressing in his own quaint fashion an error in our modern ways of thinking:

"When I heard the learn'd astronomer;
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me;
When I was shown the charts and the diagrams, to add, divide and measure them;
When I, sitting, heard the astronomer, where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon, unaccountable, I became tired and sick;
Till rising and gliding out, I wandered off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars."

The poet gliding out into the mystical moist night air to escape an icy intellectualism that he might gaze in perfect silence at the stars illustrates the longing we all experience at times to escape the critical temper of our age. We would fain leave the lecture-room for some beautiful temple of faith and there worship in untroubled confidence the God of our Fathers. As the astronomer may deal with solar distances, with the motion and

size of suns and stars until he forgets the beauty of the silent heavens, and misses the grandeur that awes the soul of child and poet, so we moderns, who are nothing if not critical, in our critical blindness are in grave danger of losing the beauty that streams across the centuries from the life and work of the Man of Nazareth, as conceived in the loving imaginations of men.

The intellect has its Christ, a changing figure, a man of peace in one age, a warrior in the next, a creature of debate, holding uncertain position in the Godhead, often the incarnation of fanaticism and persecution, the inspiration of theological subtlety, the mysterious, the unloving, the impossible Christ.

Side by side with this official Christ of the Creeds, the world, rarely consistent in its thinking or loving, has cherished another ideal, a dear, brave, tender, struggling, faltering, conquering brother and teacher to whom I like to give the gracious title, "The Christ of the Human Heart."

This ideal is very old, in some of its phases older than Christianity or the gospel story. When the Egyptians said of Osiris, the Christ of the Nile, "His heart is in every wound," they were certainly sensible of the tenderness, the divine pity that must characterize a saviour of men. And when the

ancient Persian worshipped as his teacher and leader a prophet whose greatest word was "Purity," he anticipated the gracious gospel of the Nazarene, "Blessed are the pure in heart." And certainly when the wandering Buddhist, long before Mary welcomed her babe in Bethlehem, lovingly pictured the birth scene of Lord Buddha, when the very heavens rained flowers, he was helping to prepare the minds of men for the story of the peasant mother, the manger-babe, the singing angels, and the far-flung light of "His star in the East." Very old, then, and very beautiful this ideal of man's aspiring soul, "The Christ of the Human Heart."

Let us recall this story—just as countless men and women have treasured it, and just as countless more will come to know and love it.

THE MOTHER AND THE BABE

FREDERICK ROBERTSON of Brighton used to say that the doctrine and teaching of the unstained motherhood of the Virgin Mary was the most valuable contribution of the Ancient Church to a sinful and sensual world. Guarding our thought against the false implication that Motherhood according to natural law may not also be sweet, pure, and holy, we can but believe that this constant ideal of unstained Motherhood in the minds and hearts of generations of Christian women has given to that holy office new significance. The saviours of men according to the ancient legends have ever been of divine, or superior, parentage. The gods, or angels, or godlike men, have fathered them, and unsullied maidenhood has given them birth. Is there not here a poetic foregleam of that science of Eugenics of which we rightly hear so much in these enlightened days? Must we not regenerate human life at its source if we would redeem the race? Must there not be something godlike in the one solemn act wherein Man in creative energy is most like the God he worships? As the purest waters come from the loftiest altitudes where the kisses of the sun melt

snows of dazzling whiteness, so from exalted fatherhood and consecrated motherhood will come the "crowning race of human kind."

A babe so fathered and so mothered is rich though it be born in a stable, and be counted lowliest among the lowly. Well may the angels sing, and the stars in their courses rejoice in such a birth hour, and wisely may wise men come from afar to kneel in such a presence. The Mother and the Babe! Always dear, always beautiful, always sacred; there is something here that human passion cannot wholly blight, for we ever feel as we enter the birth-chamber, and look upon the new-born babe, "Once again, a creature fresh from the hand of God." And of the pale faced mother, "She has passed through the sanctuary of motherhood, and there's something queenly about her now, something divine, for behold, she is a mother."

The Mother and the Babe. Art will cherish the picture, and from age to age will retouch it with loving patience. Music will express its sweetest charm, and in the home of prince and peasant alike, as the unceasing wonder of babyhood ennobles life, fathers and mothers to the end of time will cherish the story of Mary of Nazareth and the babe she bore in tears and pain that the world might be blessed by a new revelation of truth, purity and love.

THE CONSECRATED YOUNG MAN

THERE is a story—best told, I think, by Theodore Parker—that when Jesus was a boy of twelve, he stood one Sabbath-day with his mother at the door of their little cottage in Nazareth, and he said, "O mother, would that I had lived in the times when there was open vision, and the Lord visited the earth, as in the days of Abraham and Moses. These are sad times, mother, which we have fallen in."

But Mary took a sprig of hyssop out of the narrow wall, and said, "Lo, God is here; and, my boy, not less than on Jacob's Ladder do angels go up and down. It is spring time now, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land, and the blossom of this grape vine is fragrant with God. The date tree, the white rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley, root in him. He is in your little garden, not less than in grand Eden, with Adam and Eve."

"Nay, mother," said Jesus, "God has left the soul of Israel for their sins, so Rabbi Jonas told us in the synagogue to-day. Oh that I had lived with Elias or Amos, when the spirit fell on men. I had also been filled with him."

Then Mary with gentle earnestness replied, "God is as near to you as he was to Abraham, Moses, Amos or Elias. He speaks to you as to Samuel. He never withdraws from the soul of men, but the day spring from on high comes continually to the soul of each. Open the window, and the sun of righteousness comes in."

And Jesus watched at evening tide, the story tells us, as the purple faded out of the sky, and the great moon passed, pouring out her white fire, with a star or two to keep her company in heaven. And when the moon was overhead there came two young lovers, newly wed, and as Jesus caught the joy of their love for one another, and saw all the beauty of the night, there came to his young heart a deep devotion, a holy faith, and he said, "My Father worketh hitherto; I also will work," and so laid him down to his dreams, and slept, preparatory to the work which fills the world.

Whether at his home in Nazareth—a country home of vines and flowers, of fields rich in flocks, and woods peopled with birds—or in the temple at Jerusalem, disputing with the doctors, Jesus first dimly felt himself a Godsent man, we may not say. But in our hearts we cherish the image of a marvelous boy, like, and unlike, his fellows. One day a merry lad with others at the games, and then for

many days shy and solemn with the far-off look of genius in his eyes. Perhaps he never fully awoke to the call of God within his soul until he listened to the stern preaching of John the Baptist. Perhaps he never trembled from head to foot with the divine passion until the baptismal waters of the Jordan closed above his fair young brow. But in some hour the soul within him mastered all his being; it was his second birth; for no man ever passed to greatness save through the gates of soul-birth. The men who move the world to finer issues know the mystery of the second birth, and to them, "Ye must be born again," is but the record of an experience.

In that hour of glad and solemn awakening Jesus foresaw the glory and the agony that awaited him in the path his feet must tread. Not in hard, clear outline, as men see objects in the near sun-glare, but terribly real, as men see ships making port in cloud and storm. And thus with the shadow of coming sorrows falling upon him, willingly, soberly, he consecrated himself to a great work,—the greatest this poor world has yet recorded. This was the supreme renunciation. And is there anything upon which our eyes rest quite so beautiful as the giving of a noble life to a noble cause?

The babe in mother's arms is beautiful with the sweet beauty of innocence. The bride at the altar, with the glow of love and pride upon her cheeks, is beautiful. The mother is dowered with a sacred beauty as she cradles within her arms the children of her love. All this is natural beauty,—one with the loveliness of a fair landscape, or the stars above; but that a man, young, strong, loving life and joy, should consecrate himself to sacrificial toil and suffering for those too ignorant to know, too blind to see, too deaf to hear, too stolid to feel; that strength should give itself to weakness, that light should shroud itself in darkness that it may one day illume that darkness—this is sublime.

"The most beautiful of created beings," said Victor Hugo, "is the virginal young man." Yes, the virginal young man dedicating himself to the service of the low, sad, sensual, savage world for no reward but toil leading to severer toil until the Voice that "called" him speaks again in welcoming approval, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

And this is the picture men carry in their hearts of the young man who—until his thirtieth year—was known only as the Carpenter's Son.

THE TEMPTED CHRIST

THE New Testament story of Jesus is full of startling contrasts. A strange blending of strength and weakness. In one chapter, Lord of wind and wave; in the next, a homeless wanderer who had not where to lay his head. Monarch of disease, yet himself the helpless victim of brutal men. To-day the center of adoring disciples, to-morrow deserted by even the most faithful of his followers. Men knelt to him and prayed for favors as subjects beseech a king. Possibly some of these same men plaited the crown of thorns and fashioned the cross on which he died. In his hour of triumph the multitudes sing "Hallelujah"; in his defeat they hoarsely cry, "Crucify him!"

And the Nazarene in his inner life was given to mysterious exaltations, and anon to heaviness of spirit, as though his soul was like the strange world through which he passed. Knowing how long the world had waited for a teacher of truth and a prophet of love, the peasant woman's son could proudly declare, "Before Abraham was, I am." Just as the wayside flower might say, "Before the

mountain guarded the sea, and before the sea mirrored the sun, I existed, little flower that I am, a vision of beauty in the mind of God."

"The Father and I are one," said the Galilean teacher, and men of his own day cried "Blasphemy," while men of later times have made of his idealistic speech a hard theology. "One with God"—this homeless man; "One with God"—this hunted heretic; "One with God"—this crucified Jew! Assuredly, for his was the mind of truth and the heart of love. Whoever makes it his mission to teach the ignorant, strengthen the weak, comfort the sorrowing, cheer the despairing, and save the lost is one with God forevermore.

But again we hear him say—as all true souls have said since time began—"I can of myself do nothing." He also was a suppliant at the common fount of blessing and of power. And as one greeted him with the salutation, "Good Teacher," he answered as all sincere souls have ever answered, and ever must, "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God." A clear vision of absolute good renders humble the whitest soul. Weak of himself, and humble, he was moreover poor,—poor with a poverty that the beasts and birds knew not. For when a certain scribe, a man of dignity and power, came with loud professions of loyalty,

"Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," Jesus sadly replied, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the heavens have nests; but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." "Why Man," so it seems he must have added, "I am poorer than the birds and the beasts. No vine-clad roof in all Palestine is mine; no hearth however humble. I am a man without a home."

Why was Jesus homeless? The land was full of homes. For such a man as he home-making had been easy. Why was he poor? To one so endowed the world brings its richest gifts. That homeless poverty was voluntary. It was a heart-piercing sacrifice forced upon him by his sympathy with human woe, by his love for humankind. And here we face true meaning of that narrative—so often misread—the temptation of Jesus. The older theology has much to say about the renunciation of Christ, and his condescension in coming to this sin-cursed earth. But it is a kind of theatrical picture and the scene is set in other worlds than this. It does not move the heart, or even stir the imagination. The plain story of the Testament is truer than Milton's poetry, or the dogmas of the schools.

A young man, conscious of power, is offered limitless power to effect all selfish ends, if he will

but accept evil as a Master; offered all wealth if he will but bend his knee to the God of Mammon. This on the one hand—on the other duty and the suffering people. And do the words, "I have not where to lay my head, I am a homeless man," hint at some dearer dream dismissed for duty's sake? I do not know; but if I knew that in service of poor humanity Jesus turned away from the appealing eyes of love with a sorrow he could not always forget, still dearer to me would be My Brother of the Cross.

THE TEACHING CHRIST

BEFORE Jesus came John from the desert, one of those vanishing figures of history who appear for a moment, and are gone forever. John, the Baptist, rude child of nature, was a voice arousing the slumbering conscience of a guilty age. He was a gleam of light revealing the judgment. Stern, inexorable messenger of Jehovah, after his own fashion he prepared the people for the gentleness of Jesus. The Tempest over, we long for the kindly sun, the song of sweet-voiced birds, the rich perfume of the flowers. After the storm, peace; Jesus was that peace.

What of severity you find in the Master's speech dates, for the most part, from the later months of his ministry, when opposition, blind and brutal, compelled rebuke from lips of love. Yet even here severity is the exception; gentleness is ever more native to his mood, and the earlier sayings, parables, sermons, together with those tender words uttered as he entered the silence and shadow of death, are to-day the dearest treasures of human thought.

But who can make their beauty seen or their sweetness felt. Every kind of difficulty besets one attempting this impossible task. Who truly paints a sunrise, or reproduces upon canvas the heaven's deep blue? Who tells in words love's sacred story, or pictures the joy of a soul at one with God? Speech fails us on the higher ranges of spiritual experience; we wonder and are silent.

Another difficulty lies in the unadorned symplicity of Jesus' sayings. No deftly turned phrases, no brilliant rhetoric,—calm, clear, strong; yet seldom striking in form or rhythm. Here are words for the ages to ponder; sayings the centuries will not exhaust. Meditation and experience alone reveal their depth of meaning—meaning never conveyed by word of mouth, but rather flashed into the soul in those wrapt moments when spirit touches spirit.

And is it not true that a life-long familiarity with these gems of spiritual teaching dulls oftentimes the edge of our appreciation; especially that parrot-like familiarity, that glib acquaintance with sentiments so far beyond our childish comprehension that they remain ever for us mere words—words, words. Like Alpine dwellers, who never feel the sublimity of mountains men cross seas and continents to gaze upon; like the millions who nightly

behold the starry heavens with less of interest than is afforded by some new device to light their dwellings,—so we, accustomed from childhood to Christian teaching, read the great and gracious words of Jesus, unmindful of their beauty and unblessed by their truth.

Escaping as we may from these most real difficulties, let us try to listen, as did the men of old, to sermons, and stories, and sayings that after two thousand years still move the world. We read of Jesus that "He opened his mouth and said *'Blessed.'*" We pause at the word, for it is a new word,—falling from the lips of God's messenger. A strange and dear word,—"Blessed." Has religion then to do, first of all, with blessedness, happiness. We knew religion was restraint. We knew that in temptation it might be strength, and in sorrow comfort. But joy, happiness, blessedness each day, and every day,—does religion mean this? Here evidently is a new gospel.

> "I have known a word hang star-like
> O'er a dreary waste of years,
> And it only seemed the brighter,
> Looked at through a mist of tears."

"Blessed!" It is a star-like word shining from the far heights upon the accursed and dolorous ages, that they may a little change their course.

But who are blessed? Was there ever such strange grouping? The poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those that hunger after righteousness, those persecuted for truth's sake. Whatever this new teaching may be, it certainly is not the philosophy of the world—the cold, hard world of two thousand years ago.

"Resist not evil," "Love your enemies," "Do good to those that hate you," "Pray for those who despitefully use you,"—words like these may lie cold upon the page, but they are dear as the light of morning when translated into conduct. And is it not true,—absolutely, scientifically demonstrated,—that we move toward a higher civilization as we learn to lay aside weapons of violence? Even in our treatment of the insane and the criminal we have learned at last—at last—that in gentle patience is both safety and healing.

Very strange to the old world, and altogether foolish, was the tenderness of Jesus toward the outcast and the sinful. "He eateth with sinners," was the deliberate and sincere condemnation of the best society. His answer was the answer of genius touched with divinity: "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." When Jesus said, "I am come to seek and to save the lost,"

he gave the true motive of every genuine reform. "Conscience is born of love," and progress is the child of that masterful tenderness which unceasingly seeks to save the lost. What unfathomed depths of pity in the cry, "I have compassion on the multitude." Cold-hearted aristocracy does not say, "the multitude"; it says " the mob." And if one speaks kindly of the burdened masses it is charged, "He panders to the mob." "Be it so," said Hugo, "if anything is great that is great." "Sacrifice to the mob, to that unfortunate, disinherited, vanquished, vagabond, shoeless, famished, repudiated, despairing mob; sacrifice to it, if it must be and when it must be, thy repose, thy fortune, thy joy, thy country, thy liberty, thy life. The mob is the human race in misery. The mob is the mournful beginning of the people."

With open arms and loving heart Jesus said to the great, burdened, sorrowing multitude, to those who knew "the inherent and appalling sadness of existence," "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." These words are deathless. Their truth and beauty make them so. The sad heart of the world is ever upheld by this calm faith of the Nazarene, that the infinite God is "our Father," and that man, wayward and sinning, is still "our Brother." The soul

attains serenity, and society safety, as men enter through this gate of blessing, "the boundless dawn of Jesus Christ."

And there is no other way. Like the despairing agnostic, I have seen the sun shine out of an empty heaven to light up a soulless earth. For the great, glaring sun was only a ball of fire, and my poor little earth was scarred with graves. I have seen night come, not to bring rest and peace, but only deeper anguish. I have heard the birds gaily singing when the song mocked my grief, and even beautiful flowers were but gaudy decorations of the tomb, hiding my loved and lost. I have heard the voices of my friends sounding dim and distant as from the far shores of another world. And then I have felt the frightful solitude of the faithless soul, the unspeakable desolation of all who know not God as the loving Father, who cannot turn to man as the sympathizing Brother. This, the very heart of our faith, and the source of all comfort, we owe—above all others—to him who said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

But we might lay aside all this wealth of gentle and merciful teaching, and if there were left us the Master's story of the Sinful Woman, the story of the Prodigal Son, and the Good Samaritan,—

by virtue of these alone we might claim that Jesus was the world's divinest teacher.

Stupid men of learning, and self-appointed guardians of other men's morals, have stumbled and questioned as they have read the words of Jesus to the woman taken in adultery,—"Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." They have felt relieved that some of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament do not contain this story. Law and order must be maintained, and would Jesus send from his presence a woman breaking one of the great fundamental laws of society with so little of rebuke? Yes, Jesus would. Perhaps you and I would not, and could not. Perhaps this woman—like thousands of her class—was more sinned against than sinning. She might have been—as Robert Burns once wrote of an unfortunate, "A poor plucked pigeon,—one who closed her eyes in misery and opened them without hope."

Whatever the circumstances the one great fact is this—that in the face of the gravest crime Jesus held to his own teaching. He would not resist evil with evil, adultery with stoning. He was wiser than to attempt to cure vice with cruelty. And slowly—after ages of burnings and brandings and torture—we moderns, most enlightened of men, are

just beginning to learn that it is indeed folly to dream of converting the criminal by cruelty, or to imagine that we can protect society by severity of punishment. The only antidote for evil is good; the only cure for cruelty is kindness; the only remedy for lust is love. Here again the Master is right, though the world doubts and denies.

And the Good Samaritan. This beautiful story is like a mountain lake, from whose pure and pellucid depths the far-spreading valley is watered. There is verdure and life in the valley because of the lake, hidden in the hills. So along the devious path of man, since Jesus lived, a great, broad stream of brotherhood has been flowing ever on, and men bathing in its waters have forgotten race and class hatreds, and have remembered that they were brothers. Who is my neighbor? The man of my race? The man of my clan or class? The man of like aptitudes and sympathies? The man not of my race, not of my class, especially the poor and distressed man,—he is my neighbor. I forget him at my own peril. Science is warning us with all the solemnity and earnestness that befits the promulgation of saving truth, not to forget the solidarity of humanity. The human race is one race,—one human family from the savant to the savage. Black and brown, white and yellow, man and woman,—

we rise or fall together. We are neighbors and brothers to the last sad and sinning man of us, now and forever. What science teaches in the twentieth century, the Man of Galilee taught in the first, and with surpassing beauty and clearness. Not then in lip-homage do we call him—Master.

As I write these lines I try to think of the almost numberless congregations who have listened to the Story of the Prodigal Son. Men of Europe and America, of Asia and Africa, and the Islands of the Sea; men of the first century, the twentieth, and all the centuries between; men learned and ignorant, civilized and savage,—wherever the New Testament has gone, men have been charmed and blessed by that divinest portrayal of the nature and heart of God ever framed in human speech, the story—let us rename it—of the Forgiving Father.

For the central figure in this matchless story is not the wandering and wicked boy, nor yet the elder brother with his correct and cold morality; but the Father,—patient with the wayward and just to the unforgiving,—he who loved them both, and who won them both—let us believe it—by the power of his love to virtue and to God.

And this is the attitude of the Eternal Father toward all of his sinning and suffering children according to the gospel and teaching of the Christ.

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In the light and hope of this matchless parable we dismiss the dark dogmas of a false theology. We will not call any man or woman lost while the loving Father lives to welcome his repentant child. Over the living and over the dead arches the bow of promise because the sweetest and saintliest soul that ever walked the way of life, he who saw farthest into the heart and nature of God, taught us to trust, when all else fails, the seeking love which holds, and guides, the Universe itself.

No, we have not exaggerated. The light-bringing words of Jesus are the dearest treasures of human thought.

THE HEALING CHRIST

ARY SHEFFER'S justly celebrated painting, *Christus Consolator,* in which those who had been healed and blessed by the Master were grouped about him, once suffered in reproduction a serious mutilation. With the sick and sorrowing looking into Jesus' face with devout thanksgiving there was pictured a negro slave with his shackles fallen at his feet. A certain northern missionary society in the old slave days desiring to use this picture as frontispiece to a new prayer book, and fearing to offend Southern brethren, actually inserted a copy of *Christus Consolator* with the liberated slave left out. This book is sometimes exhibited as illustration of the effect of fear and prejudice upon presumably good men.

In imitation of these timid disciples I imagine a rationalist writing of Jesus would, a few years ago, have "left out" all consideration of the so-called miracles of healing. Now no true rationalist,—that is a man who fearlessly faces all fact and truth —can write of the gospel story and pass in silence deeds of love and pity which the heart of the world

has most tenderly cherished, even when the reason doubted.

It has long been recognized by scholars that, after making all allowance for that exaggeration which seems inseparable from faith illumed by love, it is impossible to read the words of Jesus sanely and not come into the presence of one whose works moved men to wonder and to gratitude. To modern thinking people, trained to a superstitious reverence for pills and powders, it seems a hard saying that this man by the divinity of his spirit, the serenity of his soul, put the demons of terror and disease to flight. Yet here our unbelief may come of our ignorance—not of our knowledge. There is no deliverance for man from any ill save through the power of mind. The mind of man pioneers the way to every good. By its power we are fed, and warmed, and clothed. By its wisdom we are guided in sickness and in health. The mind links us to the universal spirit and makes us to be a part of the universal life. What wonder if the mind, the soul of man, in superior development, should act directly upon the body, stilling the pulse of pain, purifying the blood, energizing the life forces, thus lifting diseased and despairing humanity to hope and health.

At the dawn of the twentieth century the fair minded must admit all this is possible, while the good of heart must rejoice that evidence is massing, daily demonstrating that mind is sovereign even in the lazar-house of disease and suffering. So we read the old, old story in the light of a new and beautiful faith. It matters not if this or that seemingly miraculous event be susceptible of proof, the fundamental fact is susceptible of abundant proof, proof amounting to absolute demonstration, namely this: that within the mind of man are powers unrealized, which once developed and controlled, will rid the world of those dread scourges which scar the earth with untimely graves. Of this the gracious deeds of Jesus are radiant proof.

In loving imagination we follow the Master as he enters the chamber of suffering. How fear, like some dark shadow driven before the face of the sun, is lifted as he draws near. He is so wise, and calm, and strong, it seems a little thing that pain should flee his presence. In the faded eyes there is hope, in the weak limbs strength; the obedient body answers to its master, the mind conscious of health, and the power to impart that consciousness to another; and so if he tells us to "take up our bed and walk," the very bed upon which we have passed so many dreadful days, why it were easy,

and here is no greater miracle than that the sun should draw the lily toward itself and paint it white and gold. Nay rather here is promise of what our race will be when the purposes of the Creator are fulfilled. What if disease, and the liability to disease, is but a stage in the evolution of man? Man walked on all fours once, if science reads the past aright. We walk somewhat more erect these days, but under heavy burdens. Suppose we throw aside the burden and demand health as our birth-right from God.

Not that we may disobey the laws of life and escape due consequence, but rather that we may fulfill all the laws of mental and physical being and come into our rightful inheritance; come also into that gracious sympathy with others' woes which is itself the healer's divine secret; for love is the cure of many ills the flesh is heir to, if it were wise as it is strong.

THE SUFFERING CHRIST

I ONCE HEARD an earnest radical say, "That it would have been better for the world if Jesus had lived thirty years longer, and far better if he had died a natural death." When called in question for this statement he made defense to the effect, "That it is the life that counts, not the event or manner of death." Thus did this narrow-minded liberal knife the truth with a proverb. As a current saying it is true enough "that the death matters little; it is the life that counts," but often it happens that a glorious and heroic death is the only fitting culmination to a consecrated life. Words that were weak and local are winged by martyrdom for universal conquest, and deeds otherwise forgotten in a day are rendered immortal by dauntless dying. It was said of John Brown—fanatic though he was—that he made the gallows as glorious as the cross, and it may be said that nothing he ever did so revealed the greatness of his soul as the sweet dignity of his death. We forgive poor Robert Emmet his foolhardy attempt to free Ireland with a hundred men, and remember only that he never flinched

when his hour came, but, boy as he was, met death like a hero. Tyranny might well laugh at the insurrection of Robert Emmet and tremble at the manner of his death, for so dying he became a force moving the hearts of men to ceaseless struggle for liberty. Manifestly it is the death that counts—as well as the life—when the reformer faces a careless, stupid, cruel generation; a world of men whose hands must shed blood ere their hearts can be softened.

And so I declare—thoughtfully, as one who weighs his words—that Infinite Wisdom could scarcely have decreed a death for Jesus of Nazareth so certain to enthrone him in the affections of the race as the crucifixion he suffered under Pontius Pilate. Painful the death and bitter the cup, cruel the scourge, and heavy the cross, but he was blessed in it all, for Gethsemane and Calvary were at the Summit of an Ascending Life, and as one has written, it were worth a dozen crucifixions to so move the world.

There is evidence, too, that Jesus labored as one consciously doomed to an early death. "We must work while it is day," he said, "for the night cometh soon." The Age seemed to know that it was not worthy so benign a presence, and those who loved him listened to his words as to one whose voice they

might never hear again, and the sick thronged his path as to a healer who might not pass their way but once. It was his habit to speak of "his hour," and so speaking Jesus gave proof that he carried the coolest head as well as the warmest heart in Palestine. He will die at the right time and in the right place for his cause's sake. Herod, "the Fox," nor yet the clamoring people, can hurry the God-commissioned man. The victorious general plans the last charge at the right moment, so will "he go up to Jerusalem in the fulness of time."

And with his face steadily set toward the city of his fathers, he will calmly say,—"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." How well he knows man, and the motives that move the heart of man. There is a divine compulsion in suffering goodness which nothing can resist. Men will forever read his story in the light that "streams from the cross,"—a light shedding heavenly radiance upon words and deeds, memorable and beautiful.

Traditional theologians preach the gospel of the cross as revealing man's sin and God's love. True, dropping scholastic terms, for virtue shone like a star and vice groveled like a monster on that crucifixion day. Surely the "thoughts of men's hearts were revealed," as the prophet had spoken. The mask falls from the hard face of the Pharisee. We

see him as he is, cold, crafty, cruel. The Sadducee, man of the world, would crucify the innocent, if so be it the powers are pleased. Pilate, ambitious and tricky politician, stands forth true to the instincts of his class. Judas, the false friend, and Peter, the boasting disciple, first to offer defense, and first to flee a lost cause, and the Soldier, obeying orders that discipline be maintained though he drive a spike through the hand of God, and the timid multitude, hardly ceasing to cry "Hallelujahs" as they scurry to cover at the first sign of danger,—"They all forsook him and fled," is the simple statement of the unending tragedy of reform. The People, the Dear People, they are invariably true and brave —*after the martyr is dead.*

And in the midst of all—Jesus.

> "But Thee, but Thee, O Sovereign Seer of time,
> But Thee, O poets' poet, Wisdom's Tongue,
> But Thee, O man's best man, O love's best love,
> O perfect life in perfect labor writ,
> O all men's comrade, Servant, King, or Priest—
> What *if* or *yet,* what mole, what flaw, what lapse,
> What least defect or shadow of defect,
> What rumor tattled by an enemy,
> Of inference loose, what lack of grace,
> Even in torture's grasp, or sleep's, or death's—
> Oh! what amiss may I forgive in thee,
> Jesus, good Paragon, thou Crystal Christ?"

Thus, Sidney Lanier, and wisely, for what flaw, what lapse, what defect, or shadow of defect, do

those last dread hours disclose? Out in the fields of Galilee, and under the open sky, Jesus has talked of a God who cares for man,—yea, for the sparrow, —but what will he say now, this Peasant before the judgment seat of Pilate. "Thou would'st have no power over me at all except it were given thee from above." Ah! it is the same dear gospel. In the hour of trial and defeat his faith is unclouded.

Surrounded by his friends he has preached non-resistance. In the hands of his enemies, the scourging and the cross so near that he walked as one already in the throes of death, he bids the would-be defender,—"Put up thy sword. They that take the sword shall perish by the sword."

When the days were bright, and men thronged his path, he spoke often of submission to the Will of God. So have multitudes who later in distress have been ready to "curse God and die." From the depths of Gethsemane's darkness is heard the cry, —"Father, not my will but thine be done." And we are satisfied. This man will not fail us. No, not if they leave him to die, mocked by his enemies and deserted by his friends.

Once he told us "to forgive, until seventy times seven." Strange teaching! Will he be true to it himself when wrongfully led "as a lamb to the slaughter?" How he might have startled the

world with judgment pronounced from the height of his cross upon his judicial murder, contrary to both Jewish and Roman law. Thank Heaven, it is the same gospel we heard in sunny Galilee. "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." These words appeal to both mind and heart. "They know not what they do." Did any man ever fully realize the consequences of his own wrong-doing when temptation had its way with him? Is this not a universal prayer covering your sin and mine? "Father, forgive—they know not what they do."

Speaking as never man spake before, in sermon and parable, he taught his disciples to call, God,—Father. Does that faith hold now in the bitterness of death? If so all is well. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." So would we, his friends and followers, have him ascend to "his Father and our Father."

True to every letter and line of his own sweet gospel, he is lifted on Pilate's cross above, the gentlest and noblest of the race, to abide to the end of time—not only our greatest teacher—but he whose faith in suffering, and whose love in death is the white dawn of our peace. Jesus is the World's Ideal. He is the Christ of the Human Heart.

Jesus and the Modern World

IT has long been recognized that insincerity is not uncommon in matters pertaining to religion. Men have coined a word to express, almost in the sound of it, the extreme of scorn for falseness in the religious life. Hypocrite—this word, of Greek origin, is older than Christianity; doubtless some word of similar import is as old as the altars at which men have worshipped with simulated piety. The hideousness of conscious falsehood is felt and condemned, but it is by no means so clearly seen that a comparatively innocent insincerity—innocent so far as vicious intent is concerned—pervades as subtle poison the religious world of today. In a kind of mental indolence, custom is placed before principle and sentiment before truth.

This false and fatal attitude is most apparent in the professed homage of Jesus in the modern world and the constant and flagrant disregard of his plainest teachings. Seventy years ago Emerson said: "Historical Christianity clings with noxious exaggeration about the person of Jesus." This large worship of the name and person of Jesus was never

more marked than now. If Jesus were to return to the churches of to-day we can imagine that he would listen to the hymns, prayers and sermons, and in the bitterness of sorrow exclaim: "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?"

How can we explain this mystery of unveracity? Is it not because of a conviction—of which perhaps we are only half conscious—that the teachings of Jesus are not applicable to modern life? Beautiful as abstract sentiments, fine enough for Sunday theorizing, we seem to feel that they are out of place in the field of practical ethics.

This conviction is an error. Civilization requires and society demands for security, constant and sincere application of the teachings of Jesus to the life of the people.

It is of prime importance that we understand clearly that the tendencies of civilization are not all good, that some of them are distinctly and distressingly bad. Moreover, civilization seems to carry within itself the forces that may yet destroy all this fair fabric of modern society, for in society, as in nature, the forces that give life also condemn to death; the forces that build destroy. Unless a higher force, a diviner law, can become dominant, one can pronounce, in the light of history, the end

of civilization. At just these danger points, just where civilization is weakest, the teachings of Jesus are strength and safety.

Consider first how civilization intensifies the passions and quickens the appetites. The savage man is calmed and disciplined by nature. Mountain and forest, river and plain, teach him sobriety. The hard necessities of life shield him from more than occasional over-indulgence. Civilization means first, abundance, then luxury and finally degeneracy. Drunkard making and harlotry are monster vices of civilization, not of savagery. Over against this we place Jesus' doctrine of purity, of personal chastity, as sweet and severe for man as for woman. Where can we find safety from the vices that threaten to destroy, save in this Christian gospel of cleanness in heart and life?

Note again that civilization develops class conditions, class strife, class hatreds, and this apparently by inevitable law. An aristocracy cold and cruel, a populace wronged and envious, these seem the natural result of advanced civilization. Already it is taught in high places that the honored maxim of simpler days, "The greatest good to the greatest number," is vicious, producing a coddled, pitiful, weak and low-minded race. The doctrine of equality is said to be poison, and we are told that

we ought not even to try to make the unequal equal. To an alarming extent this is the working theory of the world today. It will result, as in all the past, in an aristocracy dying of its own vices and in a populace submerged in its own brutality. What can save us? Jesus' divine doctrine of the brotherhood of man; nothing else and nothing less. With this society demands for its stability the abolition of war, the realization of the Master's kingdom of peace and good-will among men.

Once more, and the thought is sobering, civilization tends in no slight degree actually to increase the sorrows of life. By so much as the civilized man is refined, by so much is he made more sensitive to the evils of existence. Between the savage mother bearing many children for whom she cares only in infancy and the civilized mother of a few children for whom she cares with lifelong devotion there may be all the difference of a sorrow that passes with the seasons and a sorrow that ends in despair.

Refine the sensibilities, develop the affections, and you plunge man in deeper distress unless there is for him a gospel of comfort and of love. Never was the vast hope which breathes in the words of Jesus more necessary to the health and sanity of the race. We need his unfaltering trust in God,

his unwavering confidence in the tearless land beyond death; we need the sweetness and radiance of his faith in man and truth. Because of these things we may declare with the German philosopher, Fichte, that "To the end of time sensible men will bow low before this Jesus of Nazareth."

The World's Prophetic Day

TO the great majority of those who still observe Christmas as a religious festival, it is a day of tender reminiscence. The devout imagination re-creates the scenes of long ago. Nazareth becomes as real as our childhood's home. The gentle mother, the helpless babe, the adoring shepherds, the singing angels, the heavenly voices proclaiming "Peace on earth, good will toward men"—all these on Christmas day are as sounds and scenes we have ourselves heard and witnessed. Very real, then, are all the gracious days and deeds of Jesus' life from manger-cradle to the cross.

In former time, when men more loyally believed the gospel story, when myth and miracle provoked no harsh denial, the saints fancied that in Christmas vision they saw the Christ and heard the music of his speech. Some dim radiance of that vision yet abides. For on Christmas day his story is told in all the earth, his praises sung in all lands. And thousands who know him not—or who believe not—do yet live out his teaching in deeds of love and charity.

More than this, congregations of mistaken men will worship at his shrine who are not obedient to the truth he taught. Nations at war will lift, as it were, bloody hands in prayer to him who said, "Love your enemies. Do good to those that hate you." A society based upon the so-called scientific principle of the survival of the fittest—that is, strongest—will this day pay formal reverence to One who loved most where the need was sorest, and who said, "It is not the will of your Father that one of these little ones should perish." This is the Christian paradox, that startling inconsistency which leads many to declare that our civilization is not civilized, that our Christianity is not Christian.

Is there explanation for conduct so at variance with common honesty and common sense? To my thought, yes. And that explanation is found in the fact that Christmas is the world's prophetic day. Christmas looks not so much backward as forward. It is not so much of the present as of the future. It belongs to an order of the world not yet attained; to a Christianity not yet realized; to a coming, but perhaps distant, kingdom of brotherhood among nations and men. Christmas is a prophecy of what all days will be.

One day we consecrate to unselfish love; to making others happy. We give ourselves no end of

trouble that the child may have his toy, the friend some token of our regard. We strive in the very spirit and method of Jesus, though we know it not, to increase the joy of the world. We feed the hungry and clothe the naked. We remember the sick and sad of heart, and if we could we would bring Christmas cheer to the weakest and the worst. Some rays of Christmas charity fall within the prisoner's lonely cell, and penetrate the darkness of city slums. We have no heart to smite, to harm; the cruel word or deed is not for us, for the Christ love is law of life one day in all the year.

Christmas is a day of the heart and the home. The careworn son of toil, who in life's losing battle may have regretted that young lips ever named him "father," this day is happy in the laughter of his children. The overburdened mother, who knows all the grief of weariness and want, is this day lifted for a few bright hours into at least the semblance of joy.

Husband and wife, too often living in self-imposed slavery, striving for the riches that perish, and forgetting that love is the sunshine of life, may this blessed day renew the old endearments and find within a humble home a palace of delight. Sister and brother, friend and neighbor, give to each

other a kindlier greeting, and the living draw sacredly near to the dead upon this day of the soul.

O day of heart, we welcome thee! O day of the home, we rejoice in thy light! Come, rich with the gifts of love, with the offerings of pity, with the consolations of faith.

But why live one day by the law of love and many days by the law of strife? Why not live ever in the Christmas spirit? If brotherhood is so good, so in accord with the Master's lofty faith, why not dwell together as brothers while the years speed on? And if we are alone blessed in promoting the good of others, why not act evermore above the range of those "miserable aims that end in self." Jesus is eternally right. Love is better than hate, and to give is better than to receive. The surrender of selfish desires is the beginning of life.

Will this faith yet conquer the world? Assuredly. Love is not only better than hate—it is stronger. Peace is not only happier than war—it is nobler. And to help our brother on the rough way of life is wiser than to trample him into the dust. The precepts of Christ's Christianity are beyond the mutations of time. The influence of his holy life is an unspent force destined to command the ages.

Much that we prize may fail us, but the joy and strength of his unclouded faith in God and man shall abide—the day star of progress while the world endures. Of Jesus' final victory Christmas is prophetic.

A CHRISTMAS PARABLE

ONE Christmas morning long ago there seemed to stand beside my bed a tall and stately Angel. Seeing clearly the beautiful, the kindly radiant face, I was not afraid. "Come," said the Angel, "and I will show you a world where Christmas joy is unclouded by the wrongs and woes of earthly life."

A moment's space, and swiftly, yet without weariness, we were passing through the streets of a great city. The Angel must have touched my eyes, thus granting me new range of vision, for nothing was hidden from our view; yet I saw not upon the right hand or the left the hovels of the poor. "Is there no poverty in this great city?" I asked. With a smile, reflecting something of Heaven in its beauty, the Angel replied—"Poverty was abolished long ago. It was a foul evil, the parent of many a crime. In this good commonwealth it is unknown." At this I felt a new and strange delight, for never yet a Christmas day, but some shadow of the world's dark want had fallen across my path.

I looked again, and yet again, on either side the well-kept streets for the gaudy fronts of Palaces of Vice. Not seeing these, I asked,—"Are there here no dens of infamy, no soul-destroying haunts of drunkenness and crime?" I thought in look and voice I detected faint trace of impatience, as in one who recalls unwillingly dark deeds long forgotten. "In all our city not one. These belonged to the savage age of man. Progress swept the last of them away generations ago."

Wondering, and almost in excess of joy at thought of deliverance for my race so great and blessed, I began to study the faces of men, women and children in the multitude about me. What a revelation! Innocence! I had fancied I knew the meaning of that word—but the cherub faces of these children gave to the dear old word new beauty. I have heard men call the human form and face divine, and so they are when life has known no taint of poverty or sin. How long I gazed, enraptured, into eyes that bore no evidence of care or sorrow, I know not; but, at length, a couple in serene old age, stood before me. Surprise forced yet one more question to my lips, for such sweet peace I had never seen reflected from face of man or woman. Doubting—fearing that the answer might bring me pain, I asked, "Is there

no death in all this goodly city, no heart or home where Christmas joy is but a mockery?"

"No death," said the Angel, "as you are wont to think of death. True, in the fulness of years, men pass painlessly into the higher life; but God's Heaven is so near a sinless world that the ascended ones seem always near us, and we wait in gladness of faith our own departure."

I do not understand the cause of a certain faintness which overcame me as the Angel thus made gracious answer to my eager question. Perhaps the revelation was too great for mortal strength. I heard the Angel gently whisper,—"It is enough," then came a strange sensation as of falling from some lofty eminence, and I—awoke.

I have pondered long upon this dream. Was it, indeed, a dream? Or was it a vision and a prophecy?

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